

creating one per day. These drawings of raw earth represent the porcelain bowls central to her project. In contrast to the vitrified coloured clay bowls, the drawings attest to her gradual appropriation of the North's vast landscape and its significance in the lives of its inhabitants and the perception of its visitors. In response to this gradually developing observation, the artist also created an immense skyline. In a way, this drawing echoes the spinning of the blue and white material of bowls first thrown on the wheel in the South and evokes the sky, water, snow and ice of the North. In addition, it deeply roots the artist's approach in a direct experience with the landscape, restoring its fullness and recognizing its primacy as the ultimate container for our lives on earth.

This unexpected reversal of perspective gives the initial project a whole other meaning, as demonstrated by the current installation. In the end, turning round the pot produces more than we think...

Marie Perrault  
Montreal, Spring 2013

Translation: Oana Avasilichioaei

**OBORO**

4001, rue Berri, local 301, Montréal (Qc) H2L 4H2 | [www.oboro.net](http://www.oboro.net)

# *Of Bowls and Voices*

Marie A. Côté

April 27 – June 1, 2013

## Making the World Go Round

**F**or twenty-five years, Marie A. Côté has been creating sculptures and installations of ceramics and pottery. An evident technical skill is not the essential feature of her works, yet contributes to her subject matter, attesting to an artistic development that reinvestigates manual knowledge. The artist originally combines this virtuosity with other formal concerns to consider notions of interior and exterior, container and content, the motif and its repetition, offering an overarching reflection on identity and culture.

The artist promptly admits that her choice of clay, particularly porcelain, and the potter's wheel as her working tool, as well as a sustained interest in domestic objects have been decisive to her practice. Throughout the 1990's, her pieces, similar in shape and proportion to those of a pottery turner, addressed each other through the fullness and emptiness

defined by their surfaces, as well as their arrangement in the space, creating effects of complementarity and the inversion of forms. This type of composition also evokes the interweaving, modulation and repetition of motifs, crucial to the ornamentation of bowls and plates.

Such concerns firmly root Marie A. Côté's practice in an exploration of the qualities of her sculptures as containers and predispose her to finding original material with which to fill her pots. In 2005, she began collaborating with percussionist Ziya Tabassian and electroacoustic composer Olivier Girouard. With Tabassian, she has created installations of ceramic objects, several of which function as percussion instruments, highlighting porcelain's unique resonance. Similarly, in her collaborations with Olivier Girouard, her vases are transformed into sound boxes concealing small speakers that transmit sound, notably pre-recorded and carefully remastered sounds of the studio.

According to the artist, the main idea for this exhibition came to her during a concert of *Take the Dog Sled* by composer Alexina Louie, conducted by Kent Nagano and featuring the Inuit singers Tagralik Partridge and Elvie Mark. The proximity of the singers' mouths, to facilitate the echo of their voices, immediately intrigued Marie A. Côté who then developed the idea of making the first peoples' songs resonate in her bowls. In the summer of 2011,

an artist residence in Inukjuak enabled her to implement this project. Open to the reciprocal connection between two cultures, the artist wished to reengage with previously explored concerns of container and content.

Marie A. Côté spent much time onsite to find singers keen to collaborate with her on this project. In the interim, she recorded the lapping of Innuksuak River and Hudson Bay, birdsongs, the noises of village life, gathering daily fragments of the environment. She thus documented a sound landscape partaking of the unique experience of the place that inspires the vocalists in their throat singing, intuitively drawing nourishment from the same source as them. Subsequently, during the recording sessions, the Inuit singers held the recorder and wore headphones, making these technical accessories and the bowls central to their interaction. For the installation, Olivier Girouard collaborated with the sound editing, providing a balance between the sound and song registers, thus re-establishing the circular movement between the North's landscape and the voices it gives to those who inhabit it.

Two days after she arrived, Marie A. Côté stepped into a pool of clay while walking along Hudson Bay. This fortuitous discovery provided her with the raw material to reclaim the landscape through her own means of expression. She began a series of clay drawings,